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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [AORC](#) [IR](#) [NO](#) [KNNP](#)
SUBJECT: NORWAY CLAIMS "NO NEW CHANNEL" TO IRAN

REF: A. SECSTATE 35677

[1](#)B. LONDON 1773
[1](#)C. PARIS 1410

Classified By: P/E Counselor Mike Hammer, reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) We raised reftel concerns with MFA Assistant Secretary for Security Policy Kaare Aas, freshly back from the IAEA Board Meeting in Vienna, on March 10. Aas tried to spin the visit of Norwegian State Secretary Raymond Johansen in the best light, stressing that the concept of a broader security dialogue with Iran was based on the understanding that Iran would fully implement all IAEA decisions. Norway already has a dialogue with Iran on human rights, and inter-religious dialogue, and therefore security would just be an new dimension of ongoing discussions. "No new channel," were his words. On the defensive, Aas also said Norway had informed all members of the IAEA Board at the February meeting that Norway planned to engage Iran on a broader range of security issues. Aas noted that the proposals in the Norwegian presentation of broader security dialogue with Iran were directly drawn from previous EU3 perimeters.

[1](#)2. (C) We countered that while the concept of Johansen's visiting Iran to push for Iranian compliance was understood, the idea of a broader security dialogue with Iran was a bad idea and would only play into Iranian efforts to divide the international community. We also questioned Aas's assertions that several members of the international community were supportive of the need for increased dialogue with Iran. Under pressure Aas admitted that Norway now recognized that neither the EU3 nor the U.S. were supportive of Norway engendering a wider security dialogue with Iran, although he maintained that there were slight variations in the reaction from the EU3 to Johansen's trip (in contradiction to ref b and c).

[1](#)3. (C) Aas asked if it was a question of the level of interaction with Iran that caused concern. Would the U.S. support Norway pursuing a security dialogue with Iran at the official level instead of the political level, he asked. We flatly told Aas that the problem was with Norway having this kind of security agenda with Iran, not of level of interaction.

[1](#)4. (C) Aas promised that he would convey our concerns up to his minister. Aas made clear that the momentum for engaging with Iran was being driven by Foreign Minister Stoere. The Stoltenberg government, Aas said, was intent on contributing to a diplomatic solution with Iran; Stoere wants to play a role. That said, Aas conceded that the Iranian statements in Vienna left little hope of Iranian flexibility and were similar to the Iranian positions that Johansen had heard in Iran.

15. (C) Aas said that FM Stoere has asked the MFA Security Policy department to prepare a new assessment as to how to proceed with regard to Iran. Aas assured us that the reactions from the "P5 and Germany" would play into the assessment that he will send to Stoere and promised to share that assessment with us as well, in order to maintain full transparency. He forecast that the assessment would recommend that any further steps towards pursuing dialogue with Iran should be contingent upon how Iran behaves when UNSC considers the matter.

16. (C) Aas went on to discuss other aspects of an active foreign policy agenda that FM Stoere plans to pursue. Stoere has directed Aas to begin thinking about the formulation for a to-be-defined Norwegian initiative against cluster bombs. Aas also indicated that he hoped to travel to Washington in April in order to lay out Norwegian plans for reviving the non-proliferation UN Summit resolution that Norway failed to promote successfully last summer/autumn.

17. (C) Comment. Reflecting his keen desire for Norway to play a more active role in promoting dialogue and mediation internationally, Stoere appears intent for Norway to be a "player" on Iran. There is no doubt that Norwegians have heard the EU3 and U.S. concerns about starting a broader security dialogue with Iran, and are unlikely to take any more steps in this direction, pending UNSC action and Iranian reaction. However, Norway is clearly not giving up hope that it can play a role in finding a diplomatic solution on Iran. We welcome Aas's assurance that Norway will be transparent, but we can only hope that Norway will listen to future concerns more cautiously than it did to EU3 misgivings before Johansen traveled. Foreign Minister Stoere knows that he has the support of the Prime Minister and the Labor party to go forward with this sort of approach (be it Iran, non-proliferation, or cluster bombs). The Stoltenberg government as a whole does not yet seem to have come to grips with the fact that Norway's credibility as an effective international partner and advocate for peace can be seriously compromised if Norway fails to maintain its allies' confidence or decides to go at it alone.

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